

Indiana's Invasive Plant Assessment

Invasive plant species are a threat to natural areas in Indiana. They displace native plants, eliminate food and cover for wildlife, and threaten rare plant and animal species. However, among natural resource professionals there is little consensus on which species constitute the greatest threat to natural areas. There is little information available on the distribution and extent of potentially invasive plant species' populations in Indiana, which makes it difficult to objectively rank invasive species. Consequently, species that are considered a grave threat by some resource professionals are still recommended by other resource professionals and sold by nurseries.

Many concerned agencies and organizations have come together to form the Invasive Plant Species Assessment Working Group (IPSAWG) (partner list below) to deal with this issue. The goal of the group is to develop an assessment tool to determine which plant species may threaten natural areas in Indiana due to invasion. Through the assessment, we will develop recommendations for selling and planting plant species within the state.

Currently, the partners in IPSAWG are in the process of adapting an assessment tool from Florida to be used in Indiana (Fox et al. 2000). The partners are selecting plant species to be reviewed using this tool and an implementation process. Within a few years, we plan to provide a list of species that are invading natural areas of Indiana and are causing the greatest ecological damage. Ultimately, the goal is that recommendations based on the assessment would be incorporated by all partner agencies and organizations.

IPSAWG Partners list:

Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative
Hoosier National Forest
Indiana Academy of Science
Indiana Beekeeper's Association
Indiana Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects
Indiana Department of Environmental Management
Indiana Department of Natural Resources – Division of Entomology and Plant Pathology
Indiana Department of Natural Resources – Division of Fish and Wildlife
Indiana Department of Natural Resources – Division of Forestry
Indiana Department of Natural Resources – Division of Nature Preserves
Indiana Department of Natural Resources – Division of Soil Conservation
Indiana Department of Natural Resources – Division of State Parks and Reservoirs
Indiana Department of Natural Resources – Division of Reclamation
Indiana Department of Transportation
Indiana Forage Council
Indiana Native Plant and Wildflower Society
Indiana Nursery and Landscape Association
Indiana Seed Trade Association
Indiana State Beekeepers Association
Indiana Wildlife Federation
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Purdue Cooperative Extension Service
Seed Administrator, Office of the Indiana State Chemist
The Nature Conservancy

Literature cited:

Fox, A.M., D.R. Gordon, J.A. Dusky, L. Tyson, and R.K. Stocker. June, 2000. IFAS Assessment of Non-Native Plants in Florida's Natural Areas. Agronomy Dept., Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida.